



His Excellency  
Mr. Tayeb LOUH  
Minister of Justice  
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Dear Minister Louh,

#### **TRADE UNION LEADER SENTENCED TO SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT**

I am writing on behalf of Public Services International (PSI), the international trade union federation representing public sector workers in 153 countries – including Algeria – with more than 20 million members around the world.

We have been made aware that the President of National Autonomous Electricity and Gas Trade Union (SNATEG), Mellal Raouf, was sentenced to 6 months in prison for denouncing a case of corruption at SONELGAZ – the national electricity and gas company in Algeria – involving the overbilling of more than 8 million users.

According to this information, Mellal Raouf was reported by the management of SONELGAZ and prosecuted judicially for disclosing “confidential information”, even though the irregularities were confirmed by the Commission de Régulation de l'Electricité et du Gas (CREG). However, the government, instead of prosecuting the perpetrators of the embezzlement and corruption, sentenced the President of SNATEGS, in what apparently is a manoeuvre to eradicate the autonomous trade unions within SONELGAZ.

Dear Mr. Louh: transparency and the protection of the public good is a legitimate trade union activity. Criminal charges against trade union leaders and members who fight against corruption are a clear violation of fundamental trade union rights and in particular the right to freedom of association, which comprises the right to free speech.

Therefore, PSI urges the Algerian government to drop all charges against Mellal Raouf for actions undertaken as part of his peaceful and legitimate trade union activities, and stop criminalisation of trade union leaders, activists and other dissenting voices in the country.

Respectfully,

Rosa PAVANELLI  
General Secretary